

California Locos – The Subculture of Art



By [Admin](#) | August 3, 2016 at 8:52 pm | [No comments](#) | [Art Scene](#), [Columns](#)

By Angela Romeo

What happens if you take artists who identify with the subculture of the Southern California sun drenched lifestyle and bring them together to collaborate? Through alchemy or miracle you get California Locos.

California Locos is Chaz Bojórquez, Dave Tourjé, John Van Hamersveld, Norton Wisdom, and Gary Wong. Each member is an accomplished artist who combined art with the surf, skate, music, pop art and barrio culture that took root in the 1960's. Their work represents a melding of LA subcultures into a unique form of urban art. And the style is recognizable around the world.

Dave Tourjé is the ad hoc leader of the group. Born in Northeast LA, Dave grew up in the skateboard world while straddling the gang turf struggles. Dave's work references this background as well as the influence of the punk scene. He is best known for his large-scale reverse paintings on acrylic.

Norton Wisdom combines live painting performances with music. Creating free flowing yet detailed works on glass, Norton finishes a piece that will exist for a few moments before it is washed away. The ephemeral and impermanence of his work makes the art and the performance a true event. Norton notes "My formal studio painting practice includes a meditative dialogue with trapezoidal shapes and gestural elements, which I return to as a formal and continuous response in my evolution as a renowned third generation abstract painter."

Gary Wong is an influential member of West Coast postmodernism and a well-known blues musician. Working often in collage based process this combination of influences is reflected in the social and political themes that are prevalent in his pieces.

John Van Hamersveld is a graphic artist and illustrator. He is well known for creating the iconic “The Endless Summer” poster in 1966. In addition he designed record jackets for pop and psychedelic bands. While his psychedelic art is considered to be some of the best work produced during that time.

Chaz Bojórquez is known as the “godfather of graffiti art”. He is considered one of the first artists to make the transition from street to gallery, and is credited with bringing the West Coast style of graffiti into prominence, evolving it from a Northeast L.A. gang-oriented form, into an extremely fluid calligraphic style of international importance. His iconic street image, a stylized skull called “Senor Suerte” (Mr. Luck), has become a seminal icon in graffiti art, becoming known as the first stencil tag- a full 20 years before Banksy made the stencil his iconic form.

This summer California Locos joined with the skateboard company DUSTERS CALIFORNIA, and its creative director Nano Nobrega to produce two weeklong summer shows. The show is a multi-media exhibition of art, skate, music and film that brings together the work of these five artists. The show also includes screening of the documentary Crazy World Ain't It—The Life and Times of John Van Hamersveld.

The first show opened on June 25 2016 in Venice Beach California. Venice Beach has long been associated with the idealized Southern California lifestyle. The second show open August 13 at Studio 17 in Virginia Beach VA.

“These shows are California Locus,” noted Dave Tourjé. “We have always been a part of a subculture that says things no one wants to hear. We say them – out loud and it is reflected in our art. Our works reflects a broader, more universal human experience. Like the idealized Southern California lifestyle it has a local and global resonance – a connection to both L.A.’s high-art sensibilities and the origins of rebellion.”

Rebels with a cause? Yes. And these rebels have the artistic chops to make it so.

For more information, visit californialocos.com.

